

INTELLIGENCE 14

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SUBJECT Fragment of Textbook Used in Viet Minh Secret Communist Schools

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SUPPLEMENT

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ORIGIN

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This report (Part B) presents a translation of a fragment of a book believed to be used by the Viet Minh in their secret schools for giving Communist indoctrination to future leaders of the Indochinese Communist Party and (Part A) explanation, comment and discussion of the

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A. DISCUSSION AND EXPLANATION

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1. The text is undated, but internal evidence indicates that it was prepared just before the Japanese surrender. A large part of the immediate program enunciated has already been put into effect. This suggests that the remainder of the long-term program will be put into effect in due course if the Viet Minh continues to wield power and continues to be dominated by Stalinists. The secret nature of the text is indicated by the use of many specific terms used only in secret documents intended for circulation among Indochinese Communist Party members—quite different from those used in Viet Minh public propaganda; for example: Hong-Tuan, "Red Army" rather than Viet Nam-Giai-Phong-Tuan, "Vietnam Army of Liberation", Chinh-Phu-So-Viet, "Soviet Government/ of Indochina/" rather than Chinh-Phu-Nham-Dan, "People's Government." One of the most interesting things is the terminology in the unblushing use of the Russian word "Soviet" to designate the type of People's Committees and of People's Government which are advocated. The text is in more or less questionnaire form. It was used as an outline in the secret schools at the time of the Japanese surrender, and the pupils were made to develop the arguments more fully. Exactly the same method of instruction prevails in the present secret Communist schools and the texts used are based on the same plan and have similar contents.

2. Detailed discussion and explanation of text:

(1). Terminology: In the text the Annamese word "Tu San" (literally "private property") means "bourgeois" and has an honorable sense. The word "Tu ban"

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(literally "capital") means "capitalist", has a pejorative sense.

(2) Tendency: The text rejects any aim of establishing a "capitalist" society (that is, with concentration of capital), but envisages a transitional period of "bourgeois" economy (limited private ownership) leading to the Socialist stage. (Compare Viet Minh public propaganda).

(3) The "Erroneous Theories":

a. Theory of a Nationalist Revolution. Although the text does not mention this fact, this theory is that of the Nationalist Front--Dong Minh Hoi, QDD, etc. The omission to mention this fact is because it is a theory which has been successively advocated by numerous different Nationalist parties and perhaps will continue to be so. The Viet Minh, therefore, wishes to dispose of this theory once for all, no matter by whom it may be advocated, rather than confining itself to specific criticism of the Nationalist Front. The criticism in the text speaks for itself.

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b. Theory that the Revolution of Peoples must take place and the world Revolution afterwards. As the text states, this is the theory propounded by the Viet Nam Thanh Nhon Cach Menh Dong Chi Hoi and by the Tan Viet Cach Menh Dang. The first of these two organizations is the Vietnam League of Revolutionary Youth; the second is the New Viet or Revolutionary Party. These two organizations were both creations of HO chi Minh under other aliases and were among the original component organizations of the Viet Minh. It is extremely interesting to note that this theory, which at one time was propounded by HO chi Minh himself, is in the present text being rejected by the Inner Circle of the Viet Minh with HO chi Minh's blessing. The ability thus to reject theories previously propounded is a good example of the Viet Minh's flexibility. When circumstances, or a change of USSR policy, require a change of theory, the old one can be abandoned on the supposition that it was not really HO chi Minh, but the gentleman who bore his previous name, that had advocated this erroneous theory. As for the theory itself, it must be examined in the light of the changes in USSR policy. That policy may be divided into three separate periods, each based on a different doctrine: (a) From the Russian Revolution until the early 1930's--classic Marxist theory of Proletarian World Revolution--accepted by Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky. (b) Early 1930's to about 1941 Socialism in one country. Concealed help by the Comintern for revolutionaries of other countries. Accent on this theory weakened as a result of increased nationalistic sentiment in the war against Germany. (c) From 1940 to the present--Nationalism for the USSR; Democratic Bourgeois Revolution for colonial countries.

As for Indochina, there was no parallel to the first of these three theories because the Revolutionary Movement was not at that time sufficiently developed in Indochina. The "Erroneous Theory" here discussed is the theory adopted by HO chi Minh in the 1930's as an exact parallel to, and under the inspiration of, the Soviet thinking of the second period. He was later forced to abandon this theory during the war in accord with the change in USSR policy, climaxed by the "dissolution" of the Comintern. The new theory adopted may be considered a necessary compromise between the former one and that of the Indochinese bourgeois nationalists and of the Anglo-American Allies. Compare the "dissolution" of the Indochinese Communist Party.

c. Theory of the Proletarian Revolution or of the Social Revolution.

This theory--that of the Trotskyists--is one which HO chi Minh greatly fears. It is a theory which has scarcely changed at all since its inception. The criticism of it in the text is partly the usual Stalinist criticism of Trotskyism. Specifically it will be noted that in this criticism violent language is used against the Trotskyists. They are accused of being pro-Japanese, pro-French, etc. This accusation has no basis in fact. On the other hand, no such accusations are made against the proponents of the first "Erroneous Theory", although these proponents did in numerous cases serve both French and Japanese. These facts, however, were sufficiently known to the people so that it was not necessary for the Viet Minh to accuse them. Furthermore, the Viet Minh does not wish to accuse all Nationalists of disloyalty and has tried to woo--often successfully--certain former members of nationalist parties. There is no hope of wooing the Trotskyists.

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(4) The "Principal Watchwords":

a. The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Watchwords. Confiscation of all church properties This uncompromising expression of anti-religious Communist doctrine is certainly one of the most secret parts of this text. Outwardly the Viet Minh have tried to show friendliness for the church--there is even a National Welfare Association for Catholics--and to date have confiscated only the large properties of the church and have done this principally on the grounds of economic necessity. They have not generally disturbed the smaller church properties. See previous reports on the Role of the Church in Indochina, and the Scorched Earth Policy). This text may possibly foreshadow a more intensive anti-church policy for the future, when it is no longer necessary for the Viet Minh to have as much support as possible from the Indochinese Catholics. The Nationalization of large properties. This will transfer a large part of the economy into a Socialist economy and "this branch of the economy will dominate all other branches of economic activity of the country." This means that the nationalized industries will to some extent enter into competition with the non-nationalized ones. Although private property will theoretically in many cases remain undisturbed, it will become impotent to stand up against Socialized competition. The usual emphasis on the importance of printing shops is shown in the Fifth Watchword. Confiscation of properties of non-cooperating landowners. This is purely a threat to landowners to join the Viet Minh. If they comply, they may keep their lands; if not, they lose them.

b. Three of the "Principal Watchwords" are: Democratic Rights of the People, Improve the Standard of Living of the People, Self-Determination of Peoples. These echo Dr. SUN Yat-sen's Three Principles. They are used chiefly for external propaganda and to hide the true but secret Communist doctrine which is the heart of the text. They were particularly successful for use during the Chinese Occupation in later 1945 and early 1946. As for the Self-Determination of Peoples, the Viet Minh have always insisted on the rights of the racial minorities and sought to retain their goodwill. This policy is stated with great clarity in the text and has been to a large extent followed in actual practice.

5. TRANSLATION OF TEXT BOOK FRAGMENT.

In the following translation the parenthesis are those of the original document, except for the original Annamese in two places; it is realized that there are some incomplete sentences).

THE TEXT

"What class is directing the present revolution?" After having analyzed the different characteristics of the various classes, we ask ourselves this question: Which is the class which should take the lead in the present revolutionary movement?

The capitalist class? No; because, as has been said in the preceding chapter, this class (in Indochina) came into being only at the time of the First Imperialist War; it is still weak; and it is composed either of reactionaries, lukewarm persons, or, at best, reformists who have nothing revolutionary about them. Furthermore, the history of the struggle in colonial countries has taught us much: the capitalists of India participated in the revolutionary movement of 1923, those of China in the movement of 1924-27. But in proportion as the People's movement increased, they transformed themselves into Nationalist reformists, and permitted themselves to compromise with the Imperialists. As for Indochina, her bourgeois class has never taken part in any revolutionary movement. Thus it is clear that the responsibility of leading the revolution to success can not be placed in the hands of this class; and it is similarly clear that this class can not claim the right to such leadership.

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The Petite-Bourgeoisie? Again no; because, as was said in the preceding chapter, this class includes many confused and lukewarm elements; although the lower ranks of this class are truly revolutionary, they are not radically so. Therefore this class can not take upon itself the responsibility of leading the revolution.

The Peasantry? Again no; as we have seen above, although this class possesses numerous revolutionary potentialities, and although the Proletariat must ally itself closely with this class, it is not unified, and the sense of private property still remains its fundamental characteristic. It is a revolutionary force which must be reckoned with, but which could not take the leadership of the revolution.

It is only the Proletariat which has the right to take the lead of the present revolutionary movement. As we have seen above, the Proletariat is the most oppressed and most exploited class. For this reason, it can be more rapidly converted to the aims of the Revolution, and become enthusiastic more readily than any other class. To these qualities must be added the unity and concentration which are characteristic of this class. The proletariat is capable of leading the revolution to success. Furthermore, once the revolution is successful, this class could not itself become an exploiting class, but would use all its strength to construct a Socialist society. With their muscles, as well as with their minds, these Proletarians are able to build a new society. Thus it is inescapable that they take the lead of the movement.

What is the nature of the present Revolution in Indochina? We have noted above that every revolution within a given country depends on the economic development, the form of exploitation, and the degree of division of the different social classes in that country. In Indochina (as was noted in the previous chapter) under the domination of French Imperialism, industry was not developed, agriculture was still backward, and commerce limited. Numerous vestiges of feudalism remained. Under the yoke of Imperialists and feudal lords, both in the city and in the country, workers were unemployed, and the petite-bourgeois and the peasants were moving rapidly toward failure. In order to escape from that condition of affairs, the present revolution in Indochina must be a Bourgeois Democratic Revolution.

Why is it a Bourgeois Revolution? Because under the imperialist and feudal yoke, economy of a bourgeois character in Indochina was unable to develop freely, whether in industry, commerce, or agriculture, in order to make this country a prosperous one. Therefore the present revolution must destroy these obstacles. After having expelled the imperialists, and confiscated the lands of foreign capitalists, landowners, and the Church, the lands will be given to the peasants; that is to say, they will still remain private property. The most important point is: the development of the economy should not follow the path of capitalism, but that which leads to socialism.

Why is it a Democratic Revolution? Because under the imperialist and feudal yoke, the people of Indochina have lost all the rights of liberty which every citizen should have. Especially the workers and peasants - the working classes - have no rights at all. That is the reason that the present revolution must bring to the people (except the reactionaries) these democratic rights. Both workers and peasants should have even more extensive rights. Finally, the principal aims of the present revolution are the overthrow of French imperialism and of feudalism, and the solution of the agrarian problem. If we limit ourselves to the overthrow of imperialism without solving the agrarian problem, our revolution cannot succeed. Therefore the Democratic Bourgeois Revolution may also be called an Anti-Imperialist and Agrarian Revolution.

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Erroneous Theories of the Present Revolutionary Movement in Indochina.

We have recognized that the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution in Indochina is a tactic perfectly adapted to present conditions. We must now examine certain erroneous theories, in order to shed further light on the correctness of our views.

(1) Theory of a Nationalist Revolution. According to this theory, the only enemy of the Indochinese people is French imperialism, and therefore, in order to overthrow this enemy, the people of Indochina do not need the Class Struggle, and should concentrate all their strength to accomplish a nationalist revolution; on the contrary, the division of revolutionary strength would enfeeble the nation and increase the strength of the enemy which is French imperialism. This point of view is untenable. Present society is not divided by our own will, but has been divided by nature ever since man has been subject to the law of private property. In Indochina it is true that all classes are under the domination of French imperialism. But that does not mean that all classes suffer equally from oppression and exploitation. And, among classes, interests are opposed to one another. Landowners and Mandarins of the feudal class depend upon French imperialism in order to oppress and exploit the people. The capitalist class is the daughter of French imperialism, and generally profits from it. Thus an Anti-Imperialist revolutionary movement which includes all classes of society is an illusion. Besides, as was demonstrated above, imperialism and feudalism are closely linked, and it is impossible to overthrow the one without overthrowing the other. If we overthrow imperialism without proceeding to the distribution of the land, the peasant class (which forms the majority in the country) will not be able to participate in the revolution, inasmuch as the revolution would bring it no real advantage. Therefore the Anti-Imperialist Revolution must march in step with the Agrarian Revolution; in other words, this Revolution must be a Democratic Bourgeois Revolution and not a Nationalist Revolution.

(2) Theory that the Revolution of Peoples must take place first and the World Revolution afterwards. This is the theory propounded by the Viet Nam Thanh Nien Cach Menh Dong Chi Hoi and by the Tan Viet Cach Menh Dang. According to this theory, along the path which leads from the Revolution of Peoples to the World Revolution, there are different stages and the present stage is that of the Revolution of Peoples. They consider the revolutionary path to be like a straight line which has several different segments. This is a great error. They do not see that, during this period of imperialism, the economy of each country is a link in the chain of world economy, and that therefore the revolution in each country must be a part of the world revolution. In promoting the revolution in Indochina, we participate already to a certain extent in the revolution of the world.

(3) Theory of the Proletarian Revolution or of the Social Revolution. According to this theory (which is that of the Trotskyists, who are false revolutionaries, making use of expressions of an ultra-Leftist nature in order to mislead the people) during the period of Imperialism the economy of the world, from the Capitalist countries to the Colonial and Semi-Colonial countries, is closely linked. Therefore the World Revolution must be a Social Revolution. Let us leave aside for the moment the true face (anti-revolutionary and essentially destructive) of those people, and consider their ultra-Leftist theory for what it is worth. We do not deny that, during the period of Imperialism, the economies of all countries are closely related. But beyond this important point of economic interrelationship, the Trotskyists have closed their eyes in order to avoid seeing the unequal development of capitalism. As a result of this unequal development, certain countries have a highly developed economy, and others have a backward one. These differences in economic development bring about differences in the distribution of classes. Thus, to affirm that in all countries the same revolutionary path should be advocated, is sheer madness. In Indochina, economic development is not advanced, and differs totally from that of capitalist European and American countries. The Proletariat is still weak and small in number, and the Peasantry constitutes the majority. Add to that the numerous vestiges of the feudal regime. To follow the tactic of the Proletarian Revolution at this time would be to isolate the Proletariat, and surely cause the Revolution to abort. And we have not yet said anything about the supposition - a supposition which could never be a possibility - of the success

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of that sort of revolution; for then, with an economy which is so backward, what could be done to construct a Socialist society? In order to expel the Imperialists, to destroy the vestiges of feudalism, and to make the economy of the country develop in the direction of socialism, this revolution must be a Democratic Bourgeois Revolution, opening the way to a Social Revolution. Thus, in advancing the watchword of Proletarian Revolution at the present time, the Trotskyists have intentionally misled the masses to separate the workers from the peasants, and indirectly to help the representatives of Imperialism and Feudalism to kill the Revolution. And the watchword of Proletarian Revolution is not only one which can not be put into effect, but even becomes a deceptive and swindling watchword.

The Principal Watchwords in the Democratic Bourgeois Revolutionary Movement in Indochina.

(1) Overthrow French Imperialism, destroy Feudalism, make Indochina completely independent. We have seen that our two mortal enemies at the present moment are Imperialism and feudalism which must both be destroyed together. Feudalism here is not Royalty and the Mandarinate, lackeys of the Imperialists, but is the whole of the remains of former exploitation, and of the feudal rules and rites heaped upon the heads of the people. The total independence of Indochina should include economic independence and political independence: politically Indochina should not be under the domination of any foreign government; her economy should not be dependent upon the economy of any other nation.

(2) Establish a Worker-Peasant Government under the Soviet form. (Chinh-Phu Cong-Nong Theo Hinh-thuc So-Viet) After having destroyed the former feudal governmental machine, the people must establish immediately a new governmental machinery to rebuild society in all fields: political, economic, and social. This governmental machinery is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and of the Peasantry: that is to say, the Workers and the Peasants - that vast majority - must sit down on the head of the former exploiting minority of the land. As to the Government, it is a Worker-Peasant Government: the workers must ally themselves closely with the Peasants for the exercise of power. The political form will be the Soviet form. Representatives elected directly by the people will represent the people in the Governmental machinery. The masses will not only have the right to elect and be elected, but will also have the right to remove those representatives who shall not have filled their assigned mission properly. The Soviet Government of Indochina will include both legislative power and executive power; there will be no division of powers as in Democratic Capitalist regimes.

(3) Organize the Red Army. In order to expel Imperialism and Feudalism, before the seizure of power, we must organize revolutionary armies. After the seizure of power, in order to establish solidly the power of the Workers and Peasants, and to hold out against all enemies both at home and abroad, (who are always ready to gather together the remains of reactionary forces in order to give us one last battle), the Revolutionary Government must have a strong army to defend it. This army can only be a Red Army.

(4) Confiscate all the properties of French imperialism, of foreign capitalists, of the Church and of reactionary native capitalists, and turn them over to the government to be run. Everyone knows that the properties of French imperialists, of foreign capitalists, and of the Church are the result of years of accumulation based on theft and exploitation of the people. The Worker-Peasant Government, representing the exploited classes, should surely confiscate all these properties. As for the native capitalists, we must make a distinction: only the properties of the reactionary ones who are opposed to the revolutionary movement will be confiscated; the non-reactionary capitalists, on the other hand, will be able to live in security under the control of the Revolutionary Government. After the banks, factories, mines, railroads, boats, large companies, etc., belonging to the reactionaries have been confided to the Soviet Government, /of Indochina/ a great part of the economy of the country will have been transformed into a Socialist economy, and this branch of the economy will dominate all other branches of economic activity in the country.

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(5) All means of communication, transport and all printing shops must be placed under the orders of the Soviet Government of Indochina. We have seen that the means of communication and transport are of great importance from three points of view -- political, economic and military -- and that the printing establishments are a necessary instrument for propaganda. Therefore, in order to consolidate its power and to prevent these instruments from falling into the hands of reactionaries who might make use of them against its authority, the Soviet Government /of Indochina/ must take them under its own control. This matter is of such importance that it cannot be passed over without mention.

(6) Confiscate all the lands of landowners and of the Church and all communal lands; give them to medium and poor peasants and agricultural laborers. We have already noted the deep aspirations of the peasants toward the land. Under the domination of the imperialists and feudalists, nearly the whole of the land was in the hands of the Church and the landowners. After the success of the revolution, all lands will have to be divided among the peasants, but there are certain points to be clearly considered:

- a. Confiscated lands which by their very nature cannot be split up (for example, rubber, coffee and tea plantations) will have to be placed under the direction of the Government.
- b. When we speak of the confiscation of the land of the landowners, we refer to farm lands which are now under capitalist exploitation (for example, land belonging to those capitalists or bourgeois who live in the city and who rent small parcels of paddy land to farmers); these must be confiscated and divided among the peasants.
- c. Finally we must know upon what base to establish the partition of confiscated land. It is clearly impossible to base this upon the number of persons in each peasant family, because thus there would be confusion between the elements which are productive and those which are not. Furthermore, it is impossible that the division be based upon the instruments of production which formerly belonged to each family. The principal and necessary thing is to base it on the capacity of labor (of the members of each peasant family) in direct proportion to the exploitation of the land.

(7) Raise the Standard of Living of the Working Class. Under the capitalist regime in the class struggle, the workers always have the right to demand, in a certain measure, the raising of their standard of living. But the raising of this standard can be completed only after the seizure of the power by the proletariat. The social reforms necessary for the raising of workers' standard of living under a capitalist regime are: the eight-hour day, the raising of wages, social security, and the right of all workers -- men, women and children -- to the same wage for the same work. This improvement in standard of living must be carried on indefinitely.

(8) Put into Effect Democratic Freedoms. Under the imperialist and feudal yoke, the people enjoyed no democratic freedom -- not even the most elementary freedoms of the capitalist regime. Every time that the imperialists found themselves (because of the Peoples' struggle) obliged to grant the people a few insignificant rights, they sought by all means possible to take them back again afterwards or to cancel their effectiveness. Therefore, democratic rights can be put into effect in full only after the formation of the proletarian government. These freedoms are:

- a. Freedom of the press and publications.
- b. Freedom of organization and of association.
- c. Freedom to travel.
- d. Universal suffrage.

There is one point which we must note clearly: democracy must be entire, and must be the democracy of one class. That is to say, just as under the capitalist regime, democracy is democracy only for the capitalist class, the feudal class

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and their lackeys, so, under the Regime of Workers and Peasants, democracy can be applied only for the worker and the peasant classes and for those other classes which are not reactionary against the power of the Soviet Government /of Indochina, or which do not plot against the regime.

(9) Abrogate all present taxes and cancel all present debts, and institute progressive taxes. Taxes and debts constitute the yoke which the Fascist Imperialists, the landowners, the capitalists and the rich farmers used in order to oppress the proletarian classes. After the seizure of power, it is evident that this yoke must be removed immediately and at the same time all remnants of the former exploitation must be destroyed. But in order that the administrative machinery may function (for example, the services of education, public works, agriculture, forestry, etc.) the government must impose a new tax which will be a progressive and proportional tax, a tax which will weigh much more heavily on the rich than on the poor, during the transitional period in which the national economy still remains under a Bourgeois regime.

(10) Equality of Sexes. Under the present regime, women constitute the most oppressed category. From the economic point of view, women work just as hard as men and for the same number of hours per day, but nevertheless receive a smaller wage. From the political point of view, they have no rights at all. From the social point of view, they are so bound at present by religious customs, by manners, and by tradition that they have no freedom. Therefore, after the Viet Minh has seized power, the revolutionary government must totally free this half of the population. When we speak of equality of the sexes we mean it from the political, economic and social point of view, and for all classes of the people; not merely equality from one point of view or for certain classes, as is to be seen in the capitalist countries of Europe and America.

(11) Self-determination of Peoples. The problem of Peoples is one of the fundamental ones of the Democratic Bourgeois Revolution. The common aspiration of all oppressed nations and peoples is to liberate themselves from foreign domination in order to acquire independence. Therefore, the mission of the revolution is to fulfill this deep revolutionary aspiration. But at this point the revolutionaries must take a clear view of things and act in a wise manner. After the success of the revolution, racial minorities will be free to choose their own course, either to remain isolated or to join the other peoples in order to form a large Federation. The revolutionary government will never employ force to oblige racial minorities to remain under its domination as did the Imperialist aggressors. Nevertheless not only is it the duty of the revolutionaries of the more important people to protect the right of self-determination of the minorities, but it is also the duty of the revolutionaries of the minorities to explain to their masses the advantages and disadvantages both of isolation and of unity with the other peoples in order to form a Soviet Union. (Bien-Hong So-Viet) /of Indochina/. Such a union, based upon complete equality, would have sufficient strength to fight against the forces of reaction at home, as well as abroad, and also to shoulder the responsibilities of building a common economy. In conclusion, the principle of self-determination of peoples must go in step with the ability of revolutionaries among each of these peoples. These are the revolutionaries who work visibly to make it possible for these peoples to avoid living in isolation and becoming hostile to one another, but to achieve union so as to move together toward a world of equality.

(12) Support the USSR. We have seen that the USSR is the revolutionary stronghold of the proletariat and of the oppressed peoples of the entire world. This stronghold must be solid in order that the world revolution and collapse of capitalism may take place rapidly. Therefore, the imperialists are always trying to make use of armed interventions in the hope of destroying this revolutionary stronghold. The duty of revolutionaries on the other hand is to spread propaganda among the people and to seek by all possible means to strengthen this stronghold. Especially at this moment during which the war between imperialists is gradually bringing on the class struggle between capitalists and proletariat of all countries, and the struggle between capitalism and the USSR, this watchword is more than ever the order of the day."

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